

**EXETER-WEST GREENWICH
REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

May 8, 2012

MINUTES

The Exeter-West Greenwich Regional School District School Committee held a meeting on this date at 6:00 p.m. in the Wawaloam School Cafeteria. Members present were Teri Maia-Cicero, Chairperson; Mark Rafanelli, Vice-Chairperson; Valerie Zuercher, Clerk; Theresa Donovan, Lee Kissinger (arrived at 6:22 p.m.), and Claudine Pande (left the meeting at 9:26 p.m.). Paul McFadden was absent. Others present: Superintendent Thomas J. Geismar, Director of Administration Robert V. Ross, Student Member Angela Russo

ORDER – Chair Cicero called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited and under the direction of music teacher Carrie Scheff, first grade student volunteers sang *America*. Vice Chair Rafanelli read the District Mission Statement.

Open Forum – None

Recognitions/Achievements – Coach of the Year – Steve McGrane – Superintendent Geismar introduced Steve McGrane and recognized that Steve has been selected as Division 1 South Coach of the Year. Mr. McGrane has been teaching first grade and coaching girls' high school basketball in district for twenty-five years! Dr. Geismar and Chair Cicero offered congratulations to Coach McGrane and presented him with a Recognition Certificate and a School Committee Apple Recognition Award. Mr. McGrane expressed appreciation for his players and said that he is fortunate to teach first grade and coach high school basketball.

Citations for Music Award Students – Presented by Representative Tomasso – Dr. Geismar, Chair Cicero, Vice Chair Rafanelli, Principal Butler, Mr. Runner, Mr. Charest, and Representative Tomasso joined in honoring senior high student musicians who were accepted into the 2012 Rhode Island All-State Music Ensemble. Mr. Charest made note that more than 2,000 students competed this year and it is very difficult to make it into the ensemble.

Member Kissinger arrived to the meeting at this time, (6:22 p.m.).

Students were called forward and presented with House of Representatives Recognition Awards, School Committee Recognition Awards, and gift cards.

The following student musicians were recognized:

1. Maggie Zarlengo – Senior Division All State Chorus, Soprano
2. Mallory Leonard – Senior Division All State Chorus, Soprano
3. Courtney Savage – Senior Division All State Band, Flute
4. Eleni Giannopoulos – Senior Division All State Band, Clarinet
5. Joseph Muhitch – Senior Division All State Band, Baritone Saxophone
6. Lindsay McCarron – Senior Division All State Orchestra, Mallet Percussion
7. Jacqueline Lerner – Junior Division All State Concert Band, Clarinet
8. Remy Besson – Junior Division All State Concert Band, Timpani

2012 Civic Leadership Award Recipient – Dr. Geismar, Principal Butler, Chair Cicero, and Vice Chair Rafanelli joined in honoring graduating senior Ashley Reese, recipient of the 2012 Civic Leadership Award. Mr. Butler expressed how proud he is of Ashley and said that there were over 10,000 entries and only a few students were chosen.

PRESENTATION – Student Member Report – Student Member Russo reported that last Friday's prom was awesome! Students enjoyed themselves and had a fantastic time. Police officers on duty complimented students saying it was the best run prom they ever saw. Student Member Russo also reported that National Honor Society held a book exchange last Wednesday at Wawaloam School as part of its Earth Day celebration. This week is AP exam week. This week and next, seniors will practice in preparation for the senior project oral presentations that will take place on May 17. Correspondence 5, enclosed in tonight's supplemental packet, provides dates of important end of the year events.

Wawaloam School Presentation – Principal Melissa Marino welcomed everyone and recognized faculty members and volunteers in attendance and thanked them for their support and involvement in tonight's presentation. She said that tonight will provide a small snapshot of what goes on at Wawaloam School.

Mrs. Rotelli and Ms. Watts joined in honoring volunteer Judy Anderson and expressed heartfelt appreciation for her 20 years of service at Wawaloam School. Parent volunteer Deborah Mackay provided an overview of the volunteer support at Wawaloam School. Art teacher Amy Ray shared highlights about integrating art and science through the new Nature Center. Academic Interventionist Kelley Pigeon shared pieces relating to RTI past, present and future. Mrs. Blake, Mrs. Corcoran (and students), and Mrs. Levett (and students), Mrs. Callanan, Ms. Marcella (and students) demonstrated Advancing Learning with Technology at Wawaloam School (and at home) and explained how technology impacted classrooms this year.

Vice Chair Rafanelli made a motion to move up agenda item, *VII. a. Two-Week Student Exchange – Italy*; seconded by Clerk Zuercher; and voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS – Two-Week Student Exchange – Italy – Fine Arts teacher Nicole Pichette presented a proposal to initiate a two-week student exchange with a school in Italy. She said that approximately twelve Italian students would come to EWG in September 2012 and approximately the same number of EWG students would go to Italy in spring 2013. Ms. Pichette gave an overview detailing the exchange program that would be offered to *Art* students and said that the cost would be approximately \$2,000 per student. She and Ms. Lind would chaperone the trip. The exchange is something she hopes to continue on a biannual basis. Members asked clarifying questions. Principal Butler voiced his support for the student exchange program. Committee members agreed that participating students should not be counted absent during their travels.

Clerk Zuercher moved to approve; seconded by Vice Chair Rafanelli; and voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Rafanelli made a motion to move item, *VII. B. Grant Writer Contract Renewal* up on the agenda; seconded by Clerk Zuercher; and voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Grant Writer Contract Renewal – Dr. Geismar introduced grant writer Kenneth Proudfoot who has been working all year to assist staff members in the writing of several grants, with some still in development. Mr. Proudfoot's six-month contract ended in April. Dr. Geismar put forth his recommendation that the district extend the agreement through the end of July so that Mr. Proudfoot can continue his work.

Mr. Proudfoot answered members' clarifying questions. Dr. Geismar reported that the district has spent approximately \$1,500 per month over a six-month period this school year for grant writer services.

Clerk Zuercher moved to approve [Grant Writer contract renewal]; seconded by Vice Chair Rafanelli; and voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Vice Chair Rafanelli moved to return to the Consent Agenda; seconded by Clerk Zuercher; and voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

ROUTINE ITEMS – CONSENT AGENDA- Superintendent Geismar gave an overview of the Consent Agenda.

Member Donovan requested to remove item A. Approval of Minutes, [Regular Minutes of April 24, 2012; Executive Session Minutes of April 24, 2012; Special Meeting

Minutes of April 24, 2012] to state that she was not present at the April 24 meetings. Member Pande and Vice Chair Rafanelli said that they were also not in attendance on April 24.

Clerk Zuercher made a motion to accept the consent agenda, less item A. [Approval of Minutes]; seconded by Vice Chair Rafanelli; and voted 6 – 0 in favor.

The following items were approved:

- A. Approval of Minutes – *Items Pulled***
 - B. Personnel Items**
 - 1. Appointments**
 - 2. Leaves of Absence**
 - 3. Resignations – (As Recommended by the Superintendent, with Regret)**
 - a. Letter of Resignation from Priscilla Sutter resigning her position as .6 FTE Special Education Teacher at the Jr. High School, for the purpose of retirement, effective at the conclusion of the 2011 – 2012 school year, on or about June 18, 2012**
 - 4. Grievances**
 - 5. Non-Renewals**
 - 6. Recalls**
 - 7. Sabbaticals**
 - C. Bills – In the amount of \$277,950.91**
 - D. Home School Approval**
 - 1. One Student – Grade 5**
- End Consent Agenda**

Clerk Zuercher moved to approve the Minutes; seconded by Member Kissinger; and voted 3 – 0 – 3. Vice Chair Rafanelli and Members Donovan and Pande abstained. The motion did not pass.

The committee agreed that item, A. Approval of Minutes, Regular Minutes of April 24, 2012; Executive Session Minutes of April 24, 2012; Special Meeting Minutes of April 24, 2012 would be brought back to the next regular meeting for approval.

Correspondence – (1) April 12, 2012 Letter from Wawaloam School to Mr. Feinstein; (2) April 13, 2012 Letter from AFSCME to Dr. Geismar; (3) September 1, 2011 to April 30, 2012 Incident Reports; (4) May 7, 2012 Memo from Dr. Geismar to School Committee and principals regarding RI Growth Model; (5) EWG Senior High School Important Dates to Note

Dr. Geismar referenced Correspondence (4) and said that he wanted the committee aware that tomorrow RIDE will be releasing student growth data for mathematics and reading for grades 3 through 7. RIDE will provide training to principals and other administrators relating to this later this month. He said that he is not sure of what to expect when RIDE releases the data.

2011 – 2012 Monthly Budget Projection – Mr. Ross said he anticipates expenses to remain the same through the close of the year. He expects to finish the year on the expense side with about a \$900,000 deficit being offset by some other revenue. That deficit continues to affect the general fund balance. Mr. Ross confirmed that purchases are being held at 65% of budget; however, some purchases are still authorized through the justification process.

He reported that as a result of District Treasurer Tish Ruizzo's efforts, the requisition process is changing for next year, which will help the School Committee with budgeting going forward. The new process will afford the district the ability to produce more real-time data. That data will produce good information. Mr. Ross and Dr. Geismar acknowledged that what Mrs. Ruizzo has done is remarkable.

2012 – 2013 Budget – Including Consolidated Resource Plan – Dr. Geismar advised members that the district is in the process of starting the 2012 – 2013 Consolidate Resource Plan (CRP).

Mr. Ross stated that last year at this time, the School Committee was alerted to the current year \$900,000 anticipated shortfall in the expense budget and that under GASB 54, could take the general fund balance or any other surpluses to assign to any of those anticipated shortcomings. Subsequently, the School Committee did assign that \$900,000 to specific line items that had anticipated shortfalls.

Currently, the district is at that point again, and this year the number has doubled. The budget summary of 2013 shows the approved budget of \$29,900,000 and the original proposed budget circulated during the month of December and January of this budget season. On January 31, 2012, a document was produced that cut just over two-million dollars to get to the \$29,900,000. Mr. Ross said that he will be bringing that back and the School Committee will have to determine where it wants to assign the funds to cover that two-million dollars. He will show the committee where he anticipates the fund balances that could be accessed to do that.

Mr. Ross said that there are significant shortfalls. Tuitions are a half-million short, transportation is \$800,000 short, and Vocational Technical is \$200,000 short. There is some serious decision making that will have to be made next year. It will be challenging but he is confident that will be accomplished. Lee Kissinger said that part of the process

will be to renegotiate the CBA. Dr. Geismar said when the budget planning begins; we need to be more disciplined at making anticipations.

Mr. Ross said that under the new requisition process, he anticipates saving approximately \$10,000 on paper. Chair Cicero proposed doing an analysis on paperless School Committee packets cost savings. Member Rafanelli said that he attended a meeting on Saturday and one of the presentations was E-Board, which is paperless meetings. He will make sure that Mr. Ross has that information.

MONTHLY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT(S) – Policy Subcommittee – None

IT Subcommittee – None

Public Relations Subcommittee – None

MONTHLY STATUS REPORTS – Superintendent – Members did not express any questions or concerns regarding the monthly status reports.

Business

Special Education

Maintenance

Technology

Out of District Transportation – Mr. Ross said that this is a continuation of his recent meeting with Clerk Zuercher, Representative Tomasso, Representative Valencia, and the Superintendent. He updated the committee on the ongoing transportation cost analysis. He reported that RIDE has issued new CTE (Career Tech Education) region changes, which presumably could mean that the district would not pay to transport students to Coventry but would maintain the bus to Chariho. The out of district (OOD) rates from RIDE are impending. Ongoing negotiations with Ocean State Transit are under way. The cost for Ocean State Transit to take over the routes currently done by RIDE has been requested. Reviewing cost of school bus monitors and the savings associated with eliminating the monitors and moving to group stops on OOD buses are being explored. A recommendation will be brought forward as soon as the analysis is completed.

A discussion ensued regarding moving to group stops and the importance of notification to families in a timely fashion. Clerk Zuercher said she is concerned that it could take too long to gather information to complete the analysis. She feels very strongly that changes would result in a cost savings to the district. The information needs to be gathered quickly. She understands that change may not be popular; however, the economic climate has changed dramatically and now things have to change. The district is only required to follow the state law and that is all that it is capable of doing financially at this point.

Mr. Ross asked for clear direction that it is the committees' desire to find out from Ocean State Transit how much it will cost for them to manage the out of district transportation of private and parochial students that is currently handled by RIDE, and to continue the dialogue to convince RIDE to give those students back to the district to transport because the district thinks it can do it cheaper. If RIDE gives those routes back to the district, then the committee will continue with dialogue on group stops. The committee agreed that it needs feedback from Ocean State Transit on the cost before deciding.

Mr. Ross pointed out that under the new CTE regulations, EWG CTE students can choose which school they want to attend, which could be anywhere in RI. Clerk Zuercher asked to keep that issue separate from the private school OOD transportation discussion.

Mr. Ross questioned if the School Committee wants him to continue on the path of discussing with RIDE that EWG thinks it can take back those OOD runs and transport those children. Clerk Zuercher asked Mr. Ross to get feedback from Ocean State on the cost. Member Pande said that the committee needs to see what the cost savings would be before going to RIDE. Mr. Ross said that he has already had preliminary talks with RIDE. RIDE recognizes that the efficiencies just are not there for the rural routes, particularly in South County. This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda.

Member Kissinger left the meeting at this time, (9:02 p.m.).

Clerk Zuercher made a motion to move up agenda item, School Committee Representative at Moving Up Ceremony; seconded by Vice Chair Rafanelli; and voted 5 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

School Committee Representatives at Moving Up Ceremony – Chair Cicero asked for volunteers to represent Exeter and West Greenwich at the Jr. High Moving Up Ceremony. Member Pande volunteered representing West Greenwich. The committee agreed to ask Member McFadden if he would like to represent Exeter.

Member Kissinger returned to the meeting at this time, (9:05 p.m.).

Chair Cicero asked Mrs. Cerio to email Member McFadden to see if he would like to be a representative at the Moving Up Ceremony. Clerk Zuercher agreed to be the backup if Member McFadden declines.

School Committee Decorum – Chair Cicero stated that the School Committee has had some meetings where the meetings have not been respectful. The interaction with a member to other School Committee members has been disrespectful and hostile. There has been discussion. Individuals have expressed their discomfort to Chair Cicero. These behaviors interrupt the ability of the committee to work productively. Chair Cicero said

that she has done some research and found there are committees that have decorum policies. It has been recommended to suggest to the committee to develop a decorum policy. Also, that there is a need to update the bylaws. Additionally, it has been recommended that when inappropriate, disrespectful statements are made, the committee vote to have those statements entered onto record because sometimes inappropriate statements are made and understandably don't make it into the meeting minutes. Therefore, it has been recommended to, as a committee; take those steps to enter the statements and comments into the record. The meetings that are videotaped have not been televised for the past three years. Chair Cicero is now researching with Mr. Rounds on how to get meetings back on the air. The town of West Greenwich communicated that they have an actual timeslot when their meetings air. So the School Committee could do something like that and then inform the public when meetings will air so that the public will have access to the meetings. Currently there is a link to view videotapes of School Committee meetings that is on the main page of the district website under "Knight Vision".

Clerk Zuercher thanked Chair Cicero for the new *Robert's Rules* books and said that she wanted to make one point because she did some research too and this copy of Robert's Rules is the abbreviated version. She found a more comprehensive document. Under Robert's Rules - Basic Principles of Parliamentary Procedure, it talks about promoting courtesy, justice, impartiality, and equality. Clerk Zuercher said that she would hope that everyone would read it and she expressed her desire to have this item brought to the next regular meeting agenda. Clerk Zuercher will email members the link relating to courtesy and behaviors that she mentioned.

Chair Cicero questioned whether members want the policy subcommittee to work on the decorum policy or if the committee wants to work on it together. Clerk Zuercher suggested, and the committee agreed, to give it to the policy subcommittee. Chair Cicero said that someone also asked to have a police officer at the meetings. Clerk Zuercher shared her opinion that any time that anyone feels threatened or feels that someone's behavior is at a point where it can become threatening to them, she thinks there needs to be a police presence. She is not willing to say at this precise moment that she wants a police presence at every meeting. However, if any member or administrator feels that their safety is at risk, there should be a police presence. Vice Chair Rafanelli shared his view that that almost suggests that members are willing to condone, but have protection against. He said that he would rather address it and if bad decorum continues, eliminate the problem. He is not going to agree to have a police officer at meetings for the next x number of years, just because. It comes to a question of tolerance. Clerk Zuercher said that she thinks that this discussion in its entirety needs to be brought up again when all members are present. Chair Cicero stated that this item would carry over on the agenda until all seven members are present. The School Committee agreed. Chair Cicero said that she has talked to attorneys and to the head of the Association of School Committees. She has picked many brains for thoughts and ideas of how to resolve this kind of

problem. It is important that the community realizes they elected School Committee officials to do a job and members are here for the students, members are here to educate our students, and members are also here as role models. It is also important that the community see what kind of job members are doing as public officials and how members are representing them. They need to have access to what goes on at these meetings and to what a great job the members are doing and also the behavior that sometimes goes on here, which is unacceptable. Chair Cicero said, "I as chair will not tolerate the disrespectfulness that has gone on at previous meetings. It is not to be tolerated by any member. We have bullying policies and I feel that what has happened at this table has been bullying and we would never tolerate that from any of our students so it should not be tolerated by adults. We are the role models and our students should not be observing adults behaving in such a manner." Committee members agreed. This item will continue to the next regular meeting agenda.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS – Capital Asset Protection Plan and Emergency

Generator – Mr. Ross said that for the members who have expressed an interest in seeing the emergency generator on the CAPP, beginning July 2013 there is a placeholder in the CAPP for approximately \$200,000 for an emergency generator at the high school. He reminded members that the CAPP is to alert RIDE that the school district has identified areas where it wants to use funds to maintain district assets but that the school district is under no obligation to execute that. He asked the School Committee to approve the CAPP so that it could be presented to RIDE.

Member Pande said that she is not ready to put a generator in this plan if the committee has not had full discussion about generators. She understands that it is in the plan as a placeholder. However, if the generator comes up again in the future, she does not want a member to say that the spreadsheet has been approved, the generator is on the spreadsheet, and therefore the committee can move forward without discussion. She said that she wants full discussion to take place when any project on this list is to be done.

Member Kissinger made a motion to approve the five-year Capital Asset Protection Plan to be submitted to RIDE in its current format, subject to the School Committees individual approval of every item on it prior to the initiation of any work; seconded by Vice Chair Rafanelli.

In response to Member Donovan's inquiry, Mr. Ross verified that Capital Asset Protection Plan and District Asset Protection Plan are one in the same.

Voted 6 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Recycling Discussion – Clerk Zuercher reported that it would cost approximately \$80 per month for a 10-gallon recycling containers.

Member Pande left the meeting at this time, (9:26 p.m.).

Presently Metcalf School has no container at all for recyclables. Clerk Zuercher said that that she would like to make a motion that the committee approves this. Also, she would like to have this item come back to the committee in July because she heard that recycling might be changing in June.

Clerk Zuercher made a motion that we fund this container for sanitary reasons, for recycling reasons, for Metcalf School; seconded by Member Kissinger.

In response to Member Donovan's inquiry, Mr. Ross said that he would fold funds for this into the current rubbish removal contract.

Voted 5 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

October 1 Enrollment – Superintendent Geismar reported that the towns have reviewed and agreed to the enrollment figures of 825 for Exeter and 1010 for West Greenwich. Mr. Ross advised that the numbers on file on the October 1 count to RIDE are not the same and questioned if the School Committee wanted him to petition the state to change the numbers to 825 and 1010. Chair Cicero replied in the affirmative.

Chair Rafanelli made a motion to accept the numbers as presented [825-Exeter, 1010-West Greenwich]; seconded by Member Kissinger; and vote 5 – 0 in favor. The motion passed.

Enrollment Verification Process – Dr. Geismar reported that Mr. Clay would bring back a policy for review. The policy would be taken to the towns and then to the School Committee to enact it. Vice Chair Rafanelli requested that when the policy is ready, to present it to both towns at the same time in the same room. Member Kissinger and Chair Cicero concurred.

NESDEC Superintendent Search – Chair Cicero reminded members that their superintendent profiles are due. The committee reviewed probable dates for potential interviews.

In response to Vice Chair Rafanelli's inquiry, Mr. Ross said that there would not be a Capital Project Update this evening.

Chair Cicero proposed that the Sunday, June 10 meeting would need to be more than 6-hours and said that would be discussed at the May 17 meeting with the entire search committee.

Capital Project Update – None

Reports/Comments – None

Important Dates and Meetings – Thursday, May 10, 2012-Special School Committee Meeting-Executive Session Negotiations; Thursday, May 17, 2012-Special School Committee Meeting-NESDEC Superintendent Search; Tuesday, May 22, 2012-School Committee Meeting AND Special School Committee Meeting-NESDEC Superintendent Search (*start time 6:30 p.m.*); Saturday, June 2, 2012, 8AM to 4PM-Superintendent Interviews; Sunday, June 3, 11AM to 6PM-Superintendent Interviews; Monday, June 4, 6PM to 10PM-Superintendent Interviews; Monday, June 11, 6PM to 10PM-Superintendent Interviews; **Wednesday**, June 13, 2012-School Committee Meeting-Special Education Presentation and Jr. High School Presentation; Friday, June 15, 6PM to 10PM-Superintendent Interviews; Tuesday, June 26-School Committee Meeting-Facilities Presentation

EXECUTIVE SESSION – RIGL 42-46-4 and RIGL 42-46-5 – Clerk Zuercher moved to go into Executive Session at 9:42 p.m. in accordance with 42-46-5(a)(9) – CBA – Grievance(s); 42-46-5 (2) – CBA – (C94/Teachers’ Association) – Negotiation Discussion and/or Pending Litigation; and 42-46-5 (a)(1) – Personnel; seconded by Vice Chair Rafanelli; and voted as follows:

Teri Cicero	Yes
Mark Rafanelli	Yes
Valerie Zuercher	Yes
Lee Kissinger	Yes
Theresa Donovan	Yes

Meeting recessed to Executive Session at 9:45 p.m.

Member Kissinger moved to reconvene to Open Session. Member Donovan seconded the motion. Voted 5 – 0 in favor.

Meeting reconvened to Open Session at 10:07 p.m.

Open Session vote: Member Kissinger made a motion and Vice Chair Rafanelli seconded the motion to have Chair Cicero sign termination contract with Dr. Geismar. Voted 5 – 0. Motion passed.

Adjournment – Clerk Zuercher moved to adjourn; Member Kissinger seconded the motion; and voted 5 – 0 in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

ROBIN CERIO
CLERK